[159 cont.]

271 The "Méo" habitually drink water, but they make alcohol
273 from grain (distilled or fermented) which they often drink without the slightest moderation.

They smoke tobacco in the bamboo water pipe or in the long
276 pipe [160] with the small bowl and mouthpiece of porcelain, of a model analogous to that of the "Man" pipe.

They smoke opium in a very moderate manner. Big opium smokers are rare among the "Méo" of Upper Tonkin.

[249] Sometimes they cultivate hashish, but never make use of it.

The "Méo" are, above all, farmers and they cultivate upon
241 their mountains the various grains and vegetables enumerated above.
311 They utilize to this end parcels of land capable of growing vegetation, even the tiniest, sides of knolls, shallow basins, clefts in the rocks.

The maize is sown in the fourth month and is spread about on
243 all the parcels which can be cultivated, often by clumps of two or three hills. The ground is scratched very lightly, with the plough or with the hoe. It receives a little manure at the exact spot where the seed will be deposited. The harvest takes place towards the eighth month. It is not unusual to see the fields planted to maize—
249 as we have seen above for certain irrigated rice fields — transform themselves into ground for the growing of opium, which is planted toward the ninth month, after the earth has been mixed with a few ashes. The opium harvest takes place the third month and the ground
[243] again is given over to the cultivation of maize or of sorghum. The buckwheat generally produces two crops a year.

248 The "Méo" also cultivate hemp, to which they consecrate their best areas of ground (bottoms of cirques or of valleys). The hemp is sown the fourth month and reaped the seventh month.

231 The "Méo" keep a few bees. They often have hives whose honey is used in cake-making.

244 They raise their numerous vegetables either in gardens laid out near their cabins, or in the maize fields at the same time as the maize.

412 The agricultural implements consist of ploughs of a primitive
407 model with ploughshares of iron, and some hoes. For the harvest, large scythes and billhooks are used.

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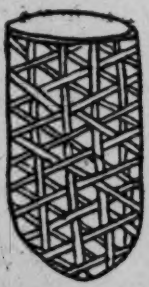
/353 cont./

A 226 The Akha, too, do not know these fishing methods and are not even familiar with fish poison. Moreover, the Akha are not nearly as passionate about it, but they are likewise good fishermen. Like the Meau, they fish with their hands, A [227] with lines, simple hooks and small hand-nets which resemble the fish nets of the Meau. The net, however, is attached to a perforated wooden hoop (chapter, "Handicrafts," Fig. 406); the meshes of the net are like those of the carrying bags.

d) Agriculture

M 243 [433] [171] Whereas gathering, hunting, and fishing play almost only the role of expanding the food base, agriculture is the actual economic basis of all the mountain peoples of Farther India. The Meau in Thailand, strangely enough, do not arrange their rice fields in terraces, though their neighbors, the Chinese, are famous masters at it, and this agricultural method makes possible the cultivation of wet rice. Thus, on the steep slopes which, without terraces, also do not permit the use of the plow, only hoe culture remains. There are still living witnesses to the fact that in former times, and to be sure not too long ago, the situation was different in the more northerly habitation sites of the Meau now settled in Thailand. For instance, I found in northern Thailand a few old Meau who were still familiar with the use of the plow. In answer to my question as to why the use of this implement had been given up, an old chief replied: "This land, and even more the country that we had to pass through to reach our present dwelling sites, is mountainous, stony, and does not permit the use of the plow. In our old homeland, too, there were such regions in which one could not use a plow. In



M 178 243 407 Fig. 266 Weir-basket of the Meau, about 1/20 nat. size.

M [227] [285]

/353 cont./

178 243 ●407 time the old men die, the young people no longer know the use of the plow, and so the custom begins to sink into oblivion, even where it could still be used today."

In any case the described tradition of the Meau in Thailand indicates that the plow and its field economy were not subsequently seen and copied from the Chinese or Annamese by the Meau passing through, /354/ but rather had been used in former times. This is also confirmed by the reports of various authors who visited the Meau in Indochina and in their other areas of settlement. The conditions there are different from those in Thailand, and the intensive agriculture of the Meau there forms the economic basis for a much higher standard of living than the members of the same people could have in Thailand. The Meau in Indochina have in large part retained [184] not only the use of the plow, but in many instances they have also succeeded in going over to the cultivation of wet rice and even to terraced fields, which presuppose the use of the plow.

243 [178] Abadie (1), for instance, writes: "The Meau also cultivate

1. Page 159.

mountain rice, but, like the Man, in increasingly greater proportions they are practicing wet-rice cultivation, which is easier and more productive." The author also shows illustrations of such large-scale fields with wet rice (Illustrations 135 and 428 on Plate 41 of his work) and then continues (p. 151): "The Meau who cultivate irrigated rice fields engage in this work along the high mountain valleys. Though the absolute altitude of these rice fields is relatively high, [361] the Meau do not live near them. The minute the daily work is finished, they again ascend to their villages, which always lie near the summits of the mountains."

/361 cont./

351 Savina (3): "There are as yet no fruit trees, but that is still
241
245 3. II, p. 185.
114 to come, and, to be sure, next. In the next fruit season one goes to the neighboring villages, stuffs himself with pears, plums, apples, and apricots, 'remembers his mother, sister, and little ones,' and returns home with a full carrying-basket. The pits of these fruits are thrown into the thicket and germinate there. In a few years, fruit trees come up. This is the origin of the fruit trees that are seen around all Meau villages. Not a single one has been planted."

The author's statement that the fruit trees are not planted, but rather owe their existence to the pits haphazardly and thoughtlessly thrown away, cannot be upheld by anyone who -- as I did -- has seen how carefully the Meau select, plant, and tend their fruit trees.

248 I report on plants used in spinning and dyeing in the chapter, "Handicrafts."

412 The agricultural equipment of the Meau in Thailand will probably be best explained by the drawings. The small
243 crescent-shaped rice-knife (Fig. 268) is typical for the Meau. It is wound around the four fingers of the fight hand by means of a string fastened to it, the stalk is seized with the thumb and the third finger, /362/ the cutting edge of the knife is pressed against the stalk with the ring finger and the little finger and cuts it (Ill. 95).[1] These knives vary in size, depending on whether they are intended for children or adults.
412 Other cutting instruments are: sickle (Fig. 271), chopping knife (Fig. 272), and the knife for harvesting poppies (chapter, "Stimulants," Fig. 289). Furthermore, the Meau have at their disposal the ax (Fig. 273), digging stick (Fig. 267), hoe (Figs. 269 and 270), weeding rake (Figs. 274 and 275). The
● 407 plow, on the other hand, as was described, is not in use among
184 the Meau in Thailand and has already fallen into oblivion, whereas it is still in use among the Meau in Tonkin, in accordance with its geographical feasibility. Abadie (1)

1. Page 310.
[1] [See cat 116, P 645 - ANALYST]

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/362 cont./

M 407 184 describes it as a "plow of simple construction with an iron shoe." So far as can be learned from the vague statements of the other authors, the other agricultural implements are identical with those of the Meau in Thailand.

A 241 243 The Akha in Thailand, like the Meau, practice hoe cultivation with fallow periods of eight to ten years, which the cultivation of rice for generally two years on the same field requires in their Thailand /Figs. 267-275 appear here/ /363/ area of settlement. Otherwise their agriculture is subject to the same climatic and geographical conditions as that of the A [407] Meau. They likewise do not use any plow, but, in contrast to the Meau, according to what is known up to now about the Akha, they did not know anything about it in former times. The terrace arrangement is also absent, so only the cultivation of mountain rice comes into consideration.

A 243 [787] When the Akha want to lay out a field and for this purpose look for a new site in the virgin forest, they, like the Meau, are bound by omens in making their decisions (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic," the section, "Magic, Soothsaying, A Interpretation of Omens"). If they are favorable, the head of [596] the large /extended/ family decides on a place that meets [782] his desires. Among the Akha, even before beginning the clearing of such a rice field, the offerings for the spirits begin. As we have already learned in the chapter, "Religion and Magic," the section, "Deities and Spirits," offerings are made to the various spirits in solemn fashion on definite occasions. Besides the close connection of the Akha with the spirits, these festivities show the great significance of rice cultivation.

Clearing begins in the same way as among the Meau, except that the Akha let the cut wood dry until shortly before the rainy season and then usually burn only once.

The fields of the Akha are smaller throughout than those of the Meau; their surface area varies between one and five hectares and therefore only amounts to the total size of a M subdivision of a field clearing of the Meau. Whereas the [241] latter subsequently try to give their property the rounded-off appearance of a unit, the fields of the Akha are very irregular in shape.